

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes ☒
no ☐

Property Name: CSX Tracks (Western Maryland RR, Tidewater Extension) Inventory Number: B-1377
 Address: West Baltimore, Gwynns Falls Valley City: Baltimore Zip Code: _____
 County: Baltimore City USGS Topographic Map: Baltimore West
 Owner: Baltimore City Is the property being evaluated a district? yes
 Tax Parcel Number: _____ Tax Map Number: _____ Tax Account ID Number: _____
 City of Baltimore, Department of Public Works - Bureau of Transportation
 Project: Edmondson Avenue Bridge Replacement/Rehabilitation Agency: _____
 Site visit by MHT Staff: no ☒ yes Name: Andrew Lewis Date: 01/21/2004
 Is the property located within a historic district? yes ☒ no

If the property is within a district

District Inventory Number: _____

NR-listed district _____ Eligible district _____ District Name: _____

Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource yes no Non-contributing but eligible in another context _____

If the property is not within a district (or the property is a district)

Preparer's Recommendation: Eligible yes ☒ no

Criteria: A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G None

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Rehabilitation and/or Replacement of the Edmondson Avenue Bridge - Cultural Resources Assessment

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*

The Western Maryland Railroad, Tidewater Extension was a relatively short spur of track constructed in the early-twentieth century along the Gwynns Falls. This section of the railroad is not associated with any extant stations, tunnels, bridges, or other structures that may be considered eligible for the National Register. The Western Maryland Railroad's closest station to this area was Hillen Station. This station was located at the junction of Hillen, Exeter, High and Front streets in Baltimore and was built in 1876. The Hillen Station was closed in 1954 and later demolished. The Tidewater Extension is not a historically significant component of the Western Maryland Railroad, and no longer possesses its historical associations with the Hillen Station nor any other structures associated with this rail line. It is therefore not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Prepared by: David C. Berg

Date Prepared: February 12, 2004

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended ☒ Eligibility not recommended ☒

Criteria: ☒ A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G None

Comments: Tidewater Extension provided WMRR's first direct access to Baltimore Harbor, making it a major link in east-west traffic, providing access to coal fields in Western MD. Highly significant

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

[Signature]
Reviewer, NR Program

Date

4/28/04

Date

5/04/04

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in the history of the corporation, as well as in the history of the Western Maryland coal industry, related transportation, and development of Baltimore port facilities.

The Western Maryland: A Corporate History

By George M. Leilich

On May 27, 1852, a company later to become the Western Maryland Railroad Co. was chartered by the Maryland Assembly. No railroad in America had a more humble beginning: one squeaky wood-burning locomotive, two or three wooden cars, nine miles of track, financing difficulties. But the men in whose minds the new railroad took shape, and the men who took on the burdens of management through the following years, wrought well, for the WM persisted as an operating entity for 131 years. The year 1852 was just 24 years after the cornerstone was placed for the Baltimore & Ohio—a road that was to affect the Western Maryland's fortunes in many ways, the culmination being the B&O's (that is, the Chessie System's) actual absorption of all WM operations in 1983.¹

The company initially called itself the Baltimore, Carroll & Frederick Rail Road. But less than a year later, on March 2, 1853, its name was changed to the Western Maryland Rail Road through a special act of the state legislature. Its basic goal was to connect Baltimore with the farming country of Carroll County and, ultimately, with the Cumberland Valley at Hagerstown.

The Western Maryland's first section, however, had even earlier beginnings. On February 13, 1828, the pioneering Baltimore & Susquehanna Rail Road completed eight miles of its line northward from Baltimore to Relay House (now Lake Roland), near what is presently Baltimore's northern boundary. The B&S was headed for the Susquehanna River at Columbia, Pennsylvania (and later, also for Harrisburg). But at the time it reached Relay House it ran into political opposition in Pennsylvania to its entering the state. Left in a quandary, the B&S decided to veer northwest from its originally planned route and build through Maryland to Westminster, hoping eventually to reach the headwaters of the Monocacy River. By 1832 it had completed nine miles of this new line, from Relay House to a point near what is now Owings Mills, Maryland, but that same year the railroad finally prevailed in the Pennsylvania legislature and got authority to build on its intended route through York. It immediately dropped the idea of the Westminster line and resumed construction northward

One of the Western Maryland's most picturesque connections was the Hagerstown & Frederick at Thurmont, Maryland. In 1951, a westbound WM local transfers Frederick-bound mail and passengers. (Ara Mestrobian)

Mr. Leilich is former General Superintendent (1953-55) and Vice President—Operations (1955-73) of the Western Maryland.

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Jack's Mountain Tunnel between Gettysburg and Highfield in the Blue Ridge was opened in 1889, but actually dates back to the abortive Pennsylvania State Railroad scheme of the 1830s. (R.L. Wilcox Collection)

Hood also promoted the passenger business and particularly exploited the railroad's route over the Blue Ridge. Pen Mar Park, a summer resort in the Blue Ridge 72 miles west of Baltimore, was opened by the railroad in 1878, and nearby Hood built the Blue Mountain House, a rambling 400-room wooden resort hotel that opened in 1883.⁴ Hood even built a spur at Arlington station to reach the Pimlico racetrack. Because the City of Baltimore was so grateful for the Western Maryland's contribution to its growth—and for the city's financial gain when its WM interest was sold—it erected a statue to Hood which now stands downtown near Lexington and St. Paul streets.

Early in its existence the Western Maryland had been heavily supported financially by the City of Baltimore, which enjoyed a freight-rate differential over the ports of New York and Philadelphia because of its location further inland. Shortly after the turn of the century, however, the city received an attractive offer for its share in the WM, and on May 7, 1902, it sold that interest to a group known as the Fuller Syndicate. This marked a turning point: afterwards the WM expanded far beyond its narrow geographic niche, becoming a major coal originator and a significant link in east-west merchandise traffic.



Typical
Maryland
Buena Vista
in 1913.





ed by the West Virginia Central's
ox Collection)

George Gould, Jay Gould's
western and southwestern rail-
Gould was embarking on an
his Wabash Railroad east to
the Wheeling & Lake
build the Wabash Pittsburg
rgh & West Virginia) to link
h. The Gould group saw the
g of its system, even though
west as Cherry Run. West
of Rockefeller capital, had

the West Virginia Central &
the Henry Gassaway Davis-
was a coal and lumbering
extended from Cumberland,
ranches to Belington, Davis.
(The line from Cumberland
nt & Cumberland Ry. and
ed as the Coal & Iron Ry..
Shortly after the WM and

WVC&P came under Fuller Syndicate control, construction began to connect the two. When the 60-mile "Cumberland extension" was completed in 1905 it was considered an engineering marvel, involving five tunnels with a total length of two miles and nine crossings of the Potomac River alone. The line was opened for freight service on March 15, 1906. On November 1, 1905, the Western Maryland had formally acquired the WVC&P along with its affiliated Piedmont & Cumberland and Coal & Iron Ry. lines. The growing Western Maryland now reached Elkins and connected with the B&O at Belington and with the C&O at Durbin.

Meanwhile, at the eastern end of the railroad the Fuller Syndicate saw the need for port facilities of its own if the railroad was to profit by its westward expansion to the coal fields and its new connections: the WM had no direct access to Baltimore Harbor, one of the largest ports on the Atlantic seaboard. Accordingly it built the five-mile Tidewater Line from Walbrook Junction (near Fulton on the west side of Baltimore) to the estuary of the Patapsco River at Port Covington; at Port Covington, coal and merchandise piers were constructed, along with a float transfer bridge for carfloating within the harbor. Port Covington opened for business on September 24, 1904, and was gradually expanded until it included 185 acres of shipping and rail facilities, a 2,500-car supporting yard, a five-million-bushel grain elevator, two coal dumpers, a three-crane ore pier, and four large merchandise piers, along with many other related facilities.

Gould planned to connect the WM with his Wabash Pittsburg Terminal (P&WV) somewhere east of Pittsburgh, but those plans went awry as his empire fell apart and the WM went into receivership in 1906. The receiver, Benjamin Bush, a vice president of the Consolidation Coal Co. of St. Louis, was made president of the WM in 1907. Although the transcontinental Gould dream was dead, Bush—who had been a Gould associate and was also receiver for other Gould companies—fulfilled the part of the original plan that entailed an extension west from Cumberland. Trackage to Connellsville, Pennsylvania (about 60 miles east of Pittsburgh) was completed in August 1912. At Connellsville the WM connected with the Pittsburg & Lake Erie Railroad, which then was a subsidiary of the New York Central System. (The one-time Wabash Pittsburg Terminal would not reach Connellsville itself for another 19 years, by which time all traces of Gould influence would be gone.)

The Connellsville extension involved a 1.75 percent grade out of Cumberland to the top of the mountain, a distance of 22 miles, where a bore of about 4,000 feet pierced the summit. The line then descended westbound for 66 miles with a maximum grade of about .80 percent.

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Continuation Sheet No. 1



Source:USGS Baltimore West Quad.

**Map Showing Route of Western Maryland Railroad – Tidewater
Extension Within the Greater Project Area.**



MIHP No. B-1377

CSX Tracks (Western Maryland RR, Tidewater Extension)

Baltimore City, MD

David C. Berg

January 2004

MD SHPO

Western MD R.R. Tracks, View from
Edmondson Ave. Bridge, Looking East.

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